

*Apr. 22 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1997*

Two at Grand Forks Air Force Base. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. Kenneth Hess, USAF, Base Commander, Grand Forks Air Force Base.

## Statement on Investment Sanctions Against Burma

*April 22, 1997*

Today I am announcing my decision to impose a ban on new U.S. investment in Burma.

I have taken this step in response to a constant and continuing pattern of severe repression by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) in Burma. During the past 7 months, the SLORC has arrested and detained large numbers of students and opposition supporters, sentenced dozens to long-term imprisonment, and prevented the expression of political views by the democratic opposition, including Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy (NLD).

I have therefore imposed sanctions under the terms of the "Cohen-Feinstein" amendment, a bipartisan measure that I fully support. As contained in the Burma policy provision of the Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 1997 (Public Law 104-208), this amendment calls for investment sanctions if the Government of Burma has physically harmed, rearrested for political acts, or exiled Aung San Suu Kyi, or has committed large-scale repression of, or violence against, the democratic opposition. It is my judgment that recent actions by the regime in Rangoon constitute such repression.

Beyond its pattern of repressive human rights practices, the Burmese authorities also have committed serious abuses in their recent military campaign against Burma's Karen minority, forcibly conscripting civilians and compelling thousands to flee into Thailand. The SLORC regime has overturned the Burmese people's democratically elected leadership. Under this brutal mili-

tary regime, Burma remains the world's leading producer of opium and heroin, and tolerates drug trafficking and traffickers in defiance of the views of the international community. The regime has shown little political will to stop the narcotics exports from Burma and prevent illicit drug money from enriching those who would flaunt international rules and profit by destroying the lives of millions.

The United States and other members of the international community have firmly and repeatedly taken steps to encourage democratization and human rights in Burma. Through our action today, we seek to keep faith with the people of Burma, who made clear their support for human rights and democracy in 1990 elections which the regime chose to disregard. We join with many others in the international community calling for reform in Burma, and we emphasize that the U.S.-Burma relationship will improve only as there is progress on democratization and respect for human rights.

In particular, we once again urge the authorities in Burma to lift restrictions on Aung San Suu Kyi and the political opposition, respect the rights of free expression, assembly, and association, and undertake a dialog on Burma's political future that includes leaders of the NLD and the ethnic minorities.

NOTE: The related Executive order of May 20 prohibiting new investment in Burma is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks on the Chemical Weapons Convention and an Exchange With Reporters

*April 23, 1997*

*The President.* Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Wallace, for your re-

marks and for your service; Mr. Vice President; General Shalikashvili. Thank you, General